

## Team effort helps capture fugitives

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By: Brittany Morehouse, News 14 Carolina

CHARLOTTE, N.C. -- A major fugitive roundup conducted by the U.S. Marshals Service resulted in 121 arrests during the past month, officials announced Wednesday in Mecklenburg County.

Those fugitives -- who law enforcement agents say were a danger to the community -- are now behind bars as a result of "Operation Swarm."

"We also arrested a fugitive out of Georgia in Taylorsville, N.C., who's wanted for sexual assault of minor children," U.S. Marshal Kelly M. Nesbit said. "A drug fugitive was arrested during this operation who was wanted in Connecticut for an assault on four police officers."



U.S. marshals launched "Operation Swarm" on Sept. 1. They said their success shows what can be achieved when local, state and federal agents work together.

The Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, the Mecklenburg County Alcoholic Beverage Control Board and the

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state's Alcohol Law Enforcement Division were credited with a successful collaboration on the investigation.

"The folks they're looking for and the fugitives they target are not easy to find," Mecklenburg County Sheriff Jim Pendergraph said. "They've done a great job at this, and our community is safer for their efforts."

Pendergraph also said he looks forward to future arrests as the effort continues.

Prosecutors say teamwork like this helps lead to convictions. The U.S. Attorney's Office has more than doubled its gun prosecutions in the past year.

"We have seen a great partnering of local law enforcement with community leaders," U.S. Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappe said. "There have a number of functions associated with the Project Safe Neighborhood movement to encourage individuals to come out.

"There have been several successful meetings with community leaders. I think if you've been out in those areas, you've probably seen a re-energized community."

Gastonia's SWAT team, Lenoir County's police department and Alexander County's sheriff's office also assisted in the operation.

There are more than 80 similar task forces across the country.